

EYES DOWN—and thinking—is the way members of the Kingston and Thames Valley Chess Club spend Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Unknown to many, Kingston has a chess club well respected over a wide area, winner of many inter-club matches and proud of its long history.

Formed in 1875, the club has just two years before notching up a century "in play."

I found out details of the club through a request for help in recording historic details of borough. The more I learned, the more I feel far too few people appreciate the pleasure to be gained through playing chess—a game for all ages.

Kingston club's youngest member is eight years old. Their oldest playing member is 80. Club nights are Tuesday and Thursday from 7.30 p.m. to 10.30 p.m. at Kingston Workmen's Club and Institute, London-rd. The club used to meet at Bonner Hill Schools and earlier at Richmond - rd. school.

Now they have a conveniently central home. Members come from a wide areas as the club covers the Thames Valley. There are numerous inter-club matches as well as the usual friendly games.

In this year's winter season, the club is playing 84 matches. Players



● Our ace feature writer Margaret Bellars investigates this week Kingston and Thames Valley Chess Club. The Club has been formed for 98 years and looks forward to its centenary in 1975.

are divided into four teams, having 42 home matches and 42 away matches. Practically every club night there is a match.

A normal club night consists of one home match of six or eight players against a like number from the visiting team and up to one dozen (24 players) enjoying internal club games, either friendly matches or for club awards.

This year Kingston club has four teams

● Time is the enemy as these players concentrate.

playing in the Thames Valley League and three teams playing in the Surrey County competitions.

All the teams are pretty high up in their respective divisions.

The club's internal trophies include the Championship Cup, the Rosebowl, the Hutchings Trophy (recalling a past member), the Silver Queen, also donated by a member and the Vizagapatam Cup, donated by Mr. William E. Waterton, club treasurer. He originally received the cup as runner-up in a boxing match at Vizagapatam, India, when in the Merchant Navy in 1948.

A spirit of friendship permeates the club.

"Our more experienced players are willing to help the weaker players," emphasised Mr. Edward Stevenson of Cleaveland-rd., Surbiton, vice-president and a life member. He joined in 1936 and is renowned for setting chess problems. Over 300 of these have been published in various journals.

"My father taught me chess as a boy," Mr. Stevenson told me. "I began composing problems whilst playing correspondence games with

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a man who was already a 'problemist.' It's like painting a picture. You need a pattern or theme running through your mind before you compose any kind of chess problem.

"The opening moves in chess bear many names. These include Ruy Lopez and Bird's opening, Dutch defence and Alekhine's defence to name a few.

"The terms in a problem include a Grimshaw, Mutate and a Wurzburg - Plachutta," said Mr. Stevenson, explaining his art. "One of the greatest satisfactions of the game is that the players meet as equals — only their chess skill counting," he stressed.

How can a beginner start, I wanted to know. Here I was reassured.

"The basic moves of play can be learned from a book," I was told by Mr. William E. Waterton. "Thereafter, chess is merely a combination of memory, calculation and time — because a given number of moves has to be made by each player in a set time."

Mr. Waterton, donor of the Vizagapatam Cup, is Kingston club's delegate to the Surrey County Chess Association and a member of